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For Release: May 26, 2005
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Highlands Council Completes Successful First Round of Municipal Outreach

Chester, NJ- The New Jersey Highlands Council hosted three successful outreach meetings over the last two weeks for municipal and county officials from throughout the Highlands. Over 165 officials from 64 municipalities and all seven Highlands counties participated.

“These Partnership meetings are designed to make municipalities and counties full partners in the development of the Regional Master Plan,” said Council Chairman John Weingart. “To that end, meeting participants identified issues they felt should be addressed in the Plan and the priority that should be given to those issues. This kind of accessible and transparent planning process will ensure that towns throughout the Highlands will continue to have an active role in shaping their future.”

Over the course of the next several months, Highlands staff members will be meeting with officials in each of the 88 Highlands municipalities to gain a greater understanding of local issues and of municipal visions for the future.

“The information we get from the people on the ground in all the Highlands’ towns will be extremely important as we continue to define the scope of the Regional Master Plan,” said Highlands Council Director of Science and Planning Steve Balzano. “Information gathered at the Partnership meetings will be reported to the Council, distributed to participants, and posted on our website in the coming weeks.”

As a next step in the development of the Regional Master Plan, the Council will be soliciting input from technical experts representing academic institutions, business/industry, regulatory agencies, and non-governmental organizations as part of 18 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) workgroups. These workgroups will begin meeting in June.

Later this summer, the Highlands Council will unveil its Network program. The Network will provide opportunities for the general public to become actively involved in reviewing and commenting upon the Plan as it is being developed. Details about the Network will be forthcoming when the Council launches its new website next month.

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